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AUTHOR Wiener, William K.; And Others
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ABSTRACT

Described is a public school project in which 47 educable mentally retarded (EMR) students (grades 9 and 10) spend one-third of their school day in regular high school elective offerings, one-third in remedial academics and prevocational skills training, and one-third in creative-leisure arts activities. Failings of a previously used remedial-resource approach (which resulted in a high dropout rate) are recounted. Discussed briefly are the remedial-prevocational portions of the curriculum including students' participation in a programed instructional series geared to improve language and intellectual capacities and a program of vocational guidance and career exploration experiences. The major portion of the document explains creative-leisure arts activities and five two-week personal experience modules titled "You and Your Feelings", "You and Your Future Family", "A Personalized You", "You and the Drug Culture", and "You and Others." Aspects of the modules described include role playing emotional situations, multimedia presentations concerning human sexuality, and student visits to hospitalized persons. Successful results of the program such as decreases in aggressive behavior, increased school participation, and improved scores on a Person-Group Relationship Scale (which is appended) are noted. Also appended is a list of creative and leisure arts program components. (LS)

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SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND CREATIVE EXPLORATIONS FOR THE HANDICAPPED STUDENT[1]

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By

William K. Wiener

Lenoir Rhyne College

Hickory, North Carolina

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EC 071 444

The educational program for secondary school handicapped youngsters in the project school district had admittedly paid lip-service to the needs of these students. Lack of funds, well-trained personnel and the insensitive attitude of some teachers toward students with learning and mental deficiencies led to a program that could be characterized as futile remediation. The handicapped students enrolled in the ninth and tenth grades prior to the project era received, along with his E.M.R. label, daily doses of remedial reading; english and math from members of the regular high school staff; some vocational training, if he was fortunate enough not to be suspended from the class as a behavior problem; and a bit of assistance from a resource teacher.

The remedial-resource approach was initiated when several high schools in the county were consolidated at the beginning of the 1970-71 school year. Up to this time, the handicapped student was an unidentified member of the high school milieu. During the 1972-73 school year, scores on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, (Houghton Mifflin Co.), were used as a criteria for grouping students along with Stanford-Binet scores as a primary assessment for student placement in the Educationally Mentally Retarded class. Little attempt was made to ascertain a more discrete classification by the school. Instruction bore little resemblence to individualization.

The results of the pre-project program for the handicapped student may be mirrored in the drop-out statistics for the district's high school. In 1970-71, fourteen (14) per cent (N=57) of the ninth and nine(9) per cent (N=26) left school. During the following year, thirteen (13) per cent (N=56) of the ninth and twelve (12) per cent (N=48) of the tenth grade students dropped out.

School officials report that a substantial number of drop-outs were enrolled in the E.M.R. program.

The realization that the secondary school program was having an adverse effect upon handicapped students, coupled with the fact that the majority of people in the attendance area of the county schools live in a cultural vacuum on a low socio-economic level, led to the conceptualization of a program that would provide opportunities for the student to develop creatively, emotionally and socially.

It was felt that a program for the high school age handicapped youngster should not only provide cognitive vocationally related input, but offer students a number of alternatives in the realm of creativity to aid in their adjustment to leisure time and provide them with linkages within and outside their community.

Informal interviews with students and district administrative personnel gave credence to the drop-out figures. Ninth and tenth graders felt that the E.M.R. program was irrelevant and not worth the investment of two years time to enable them to participate in the "good" vocational offerings of the eleventh and twelfth years.

Thus, the remedial-resource approach was scrapped in favor of a curriculum that would provide the student enrolled in the E.M.R. program with one third of the school day spent in regular high school elective offerings (typing, home economics, agriculture,chorus,etc.), one third in remedial academics and pre-vocational skills training, and one third in creative-leisure arts activities.

The remedial-pre-vocational portion of the program is taught by both of the project teachers through the use of teacher-made learning activities packages in math and the language arts, and commercially prepared individualized instruction kits. Subject matter is closely correlated with vocational skills.

Students in the project are experiencing a high degree of success through their participation in the "Think" program; a component of the Innovative Sciences Incorporated (I.S.I.) Learning Systems. "Think" is geared to improve language and intellectual capacities in students who range from the illiterate to those on a mid-ninth grade level. The program takes the students through a Language Analysis component which emphasizes decoding and word attack skills through a phonics approach. He then moves into the actual "Think" modules which are structures to enable him to acquire skills on four levels of abstraction:

1. Physical and Perceptual Characteristics of Things ("Think I")
2. Primary Uses of Things ("Think II")
3. Projected, Implied and Creative Uses of Things ("Think III")
4. Symbolism ("Think IV")

This programmed instructional series with instructional tapes and progress sheets has provided a new, highly motivational, approach to the majority of the project participants: an approach where they may experience success at their own rate of speed.

In addition, HIRE-The Talking Page (Responsive Environments Corporation) was adopted by the project staff for use in the academic- pre-vocational segmemt of the curriculum. The HIRE program is designed for the handicapped upper grade and secondary school student. Developed on a 3.5 and above reading level, HIRE offers the student vocational guidance as well as adjustment and career exploration experiences.

In line with the goals of the project, the HIRE program builds skills for getting and keeping employment, enhances skills in life experiences and increases the student's knowledge of job requirements. This self-directed program gives

the student "hands-on" experiences through such simulated activities as finding a job through want ads and writing a job application; filing with Social Security, making out income tax and insurance forms; family budgeting, installment buying and banking, and securing credit. The student is also given a sampling of the work involved in a variety of semi-skilled and skilled employment fields.

The third component of the project, Creative-Leisure Time Activities, represents an attempt to expose the student to a number of avenues in which he may wish to channel his "off-the-job" energy. In addition to providing the project participant with a wide variety of activities to explore, a primary goal of this component is to bring the individual in touch with himself and provide him with feedback about his handling of problems he may face in his social sphere. Thus, interspersed with the creative-leisure arts activities, are five two-week personal experience modules.

The first of these modules, "You and Your Feelings," is designed to enable the participant to develop a sensitivity to his feelings and emotions and gain insight into how he effects others with whom he interacts. During the opening session of this module, participants share their general impressions of the program and the behavior of staff and classmates by listing "turn-on"-"turn-off" behaviors that they have observed. The behaviors that are generated are used as a basis for a number of role-play situations. Students are asked to form dyads for a three-to five minute role-play to be performed before the group. Following each presentation, group members comment upon their perceptions of what took place in terms of realism and the particular behavior exhibited by the players. From time to time, comment may become rather heated with some group members indulging in aggressive behavior.

Following outbursts of this type, the aggressive group member's behavior is analyzed and alternatives suggested which are tested-out by the aggressor.

One of the objectives of this module is to enable each participant to experiment with a number of behavioral alternatives in dealing with problem situations involving peers, parents and authority figures. This is accomplished through the use of problem analysis and simulation games such as the Target Behavior Kit (Select-Ed Inc.) and Generation Gap (Western Publishing Co.). Following each activity, participants are given feedback by members of the group concerning the positive and negative aspects of their behavior.

A salient outcome of the "You and Your Feelings" module is a reported decrease in aggressive behavior among group members in problem situations, and a greater cohesion among students who have participated in this activity.

Another two-week experiential module, "You and Your Furture Family," is geared to the development of wholesome attitudes toward sex and family. Male and female students were segregated for this module, as it was felt that discussion might be inhibited in a mixed group. Daily meetings featured multi-media presentations concerning human sexuality, family planning and social problems involving the family and the male-female relationship. These are followed by discussions and role-play situations. The instructional staff for this module makes no attempt to moralize and accepts student discussions and reports of their activities at face value. However, staff members point out alternatives to reported behaviors and underline the consequences of particular behavior patterns.

The sexes are again segregated for the module, "A Personalized You." The female version focuses upon the improvement of body image. Girls are given individual advice on hair-styling, cosmetic application, clothing selection, posture, move-

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ment and socializing skills. During the male portion of this module, emphasis is placed upon the social skills needed to build a male-female relationship.

"A Personalized You" enables the student to synthesize the information they have received in the first two personal experience modules.

An increasing number of drug abuse cases among the total high school population in the district led to the insertion of the experiential module, "You and the Drug Culture." Rather than using a moralistic or health education approach, the module features a number of realistic films and informal conversations with former drug addicts. As is the case with the previous modules, preaching and moralization by the project staff are rejected in order that the student may express and gain acceptance of his own experiences and feelings.

The last module in the personal experience series enables the student to explore ways in which he may be of service to others during the course of the year. Students participate in the "You and Others" module one afternoon a week by taking part in one of the following activities:

1. Hospital visitation to social services patients, the aged and children.
2. Work with Good Will Industries.
3. Visits to the County Home for the Aged to generally entertain patients.
4. Performance of an aide role in the Districit Trainable classes.
5. Work at the community day-care facility.
6. Work at the local prison unit.

Linkages are being established with local service organizations to present the participant with a variety of community involvement possibilities.

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Through his work in this module and informal sharing of his experiences with his peers, the student may realize that he can have an impact on the lives of others, thereby improving his own self-image.

The Creative-Leisure Arts Activities offer each student a choice of one of three activities for a two-week period. Activities are in the areas of Drama, including pantomime/improvisation, play production and movie-making; Art, ranging from sculpture to photography; Music, providing guitar instruction, choral groups and opportunities to attend concerts; Leisure Arts and General Productivity.

Leisure Arts include golf, bowling, billiards, card playing, and a variety of other activities determined by student interest. The General productivity activities are designed to offer students a number of alternatives for productive leisure time expenditure. Decoupage, chair caning, furniture restoration, macrame, are a sampling of the activities offered. (See appendix I for a complete listing).

The Creative-Leisure Arts portion of the project is structured to enable the student to make choices within a limited range for each two week period. Thus, he is exposed to a number of cultural, creative, and leisure time activitites during the course of tne year.

Although the progress of the forty-seven students involved in the project can not as yet be reported, certain trends seem to be in evidence.

The Person--Group Relationship Scale-Form S (Felsen, 1973) was administered to the project participants during the first week of school and after the project had been in operation for two months. This instrument is designed to measure an individual's relationship or type of membership he has in a particular group. Each of the nine membership types are based upon the individual's perceived attraction to and acceptance by the group, which in this situation are the project

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participants. (See Appendix II).

Person-Group Relationship Scale scores indicated a trend towards higher ance and attraction to the group by the students who had taken part in the "You and Your Feelings"and "You and Your Future Family" experiences than by those who had not, as yet, had the opportunity to do so.

Data collected from an informal adjective cheklist to gauge the teachers' perception of student attitudes on personal and interpersonal dimensions indicate a movement of students to more positive attitudes as the project progresses.

Attendance figures collected during the first three months of the project show an increase in school participation among the project group.

The implementation of the project represented a radical departure from the traditional high school curriculum for the handicapped student in the district. Although attempts had been made to inform prospective participants and their parents of the structure and objectives of the project, some hostile attitudes were in evidence during the opening weeks of school.

The four-member project staff, consisting of a teacher-project director, a project teacher, a full-time aide, and a student teacher, have attempted to bring about acceptance of the program by eliciting parental and community assistance in transporting students to off-campus experiences. Community resources have also been tapped to provide instruction for many of the Creative-Leisure Arts Activities.

Although plans are presently being discussed to extend the Creative-Leisure Arts components of the project to the eleventh and twelfth grade handicapped students in order to provide an added dimension to the present work-study curriculum, the project staff is faced with the possibility of project termination through lack of funds.

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Thus, a program which will no doubt prove to be a statistical success with the concentrated effort to develop academic and pre-vocational skills as well as positive social-emotional behavior, may, in the final analysis, end up another example of "Band-aid therapy."

To guard against the possibility of project termination and insure the continuation of the development of the skills and attitudes in the project group, a fourth component has been implemented. This is in the form of a comprehensive in-service program for all upper-elementary and secondary school teachers who have or will have contact with handicapped students.

Rather than the usual after school course-type of in-service, teachers are participating in an "on-the-job" program. Following introductory sessions on the social-emotional and educational needs of the student with mild general learning disabilities, curriculum, and individualization theory held during teacher planning periods, teachers are assisted in the development of individualized materials and positive attitudes toward the handicapped student during individual and small group meetings with the in-service instructor.

The "on-the-job" variety of in-service education is a bit time consuming. However the receptivity of the teachers to the concepts presented indicates that it is a worthwhile effort.

It seems that with a project that is dependent upon Federal and State funds, it is essential to provide some sort of insurance for continuation. Although the stoppage of money will cause a reallocation of project personnel and resources, through in-service work, the regular classroom teacher will be made aware and, hopefully, carry out the objectives of the project.

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Appendix I

Creative and Leisure Arts Components

*Dr_1 Pantomine/Improvisation

Participants will be involved in pantomine and improvisational experiences. These experiences will be designed to give participants further insight into themselves as individuals and provide them with an outlet for acting-out their behaviors and empathizing with the situations of others. (Duration: 2 weeks)

*Dr_2 Play Production

This module is related to modules A_3. It involves the production of a play for presentation to one or more service groups. Participants in this module will take part in the many facets of play production. (Duration: 4 weeks)

*Dr_3 Making a Movie

This module will be offered in conjunction with module A_5. Participants will conceive, plan, and act in a motion picture to be filmed by students involved in A_5. (Duration: 4 weeks)

*A_1 Drawing and Painting

This module will focus on the exploration of a variety of art media ranging from pencil and pen sketching and use of pastels to painting with water color and with oil. (Duration: 2 weeks)

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*A_2 Sculpture

Participants will be exposed to a variety of materials used in sculpture, such as clay, wood, metal, and paper. During the course of this module, participants will be encouraged to experience all media and exercise choice in selecting one (or more) for a project of their own selection. (Duration: 2 weeks)

*A_3 Scenery Production

Related to module Dr_2, this module will enable the participants to apply the experiences of modules A_1 and A_2 to the production of a background for dramatic production outlined in Dr_2.

Scenery production will involve all Dr_2 and A_3 participants in decision making and the application of creative talents to a concrete end.

*A_4 Photography

Participants in this experience will be instructed in some of the basics of photography and asked to develop a photographic essay on a topic suggested by the participants. Individual activities are expected to grow out of the group experience. (Duration: 2 weeks)

*A_5 Making a Movie

Working with students participating in Module Dr_3 participants in this experience will be responsible for the filming and general production of the movie. Cooperative planning and decision-making between the two groups will be essential to the production of the finished product. (Duration: 4 weeks)

M_1 Guitar Instruction

Participants in this module will receive instruction on the basic chords and techniques concerning the guitar. They will be encouraged to play along with the popular records and sing and play on their own. (Duration: 2 weeks)

M_2 Additional Instrumental Instruction

Depending on the interests of the student instruction may be offered on other musical instruments.

M_3 Choral Group

This module is intended to capitalize upon the vocal abilities of the students. Participants will have the opportunity to sing and harmonize a wide range of material. Depending upon student interest, performances may be produced in conjunction with Component V. (Duration: 2 weeks)

M_4 Action Appreciation

This module will make it possible for all participants to attend concerts and musical performances in the area throughout the year. Participants will be exposed to professional performances ranging from rock to Rachmoninoff. (Duration: Throughout semesters)

*Da_1 Modern Dance

Following an introduction to the basics of modern dance, participants will be encouraged to express emotions and situations through the dance medium. (Duration: 2 weeks)

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Da_2 Interest Groups and Dance

Dependent upon student interest, participants may elect to receive instruction in the basics of tap and ballet.

LA_1 Golf

Participants will be introduced to the basics of golf. Emphasis will be placed upon actual experience and will include sessions at the driving range and on the golf course. (Duration: 2 weeks)

LA_2 Bowling

The emphasis of this module will be on developing bowling skills through practice. This module will be conducted at a bowling alley. (Duration: 2 weeks)

LA_3 Card Playing

Participants will be involved in a variety of card games including poker, solitaire, and bridge. (Duration: 2 weeks)

LA_4 Billiards

This module will focus on playing pool and its variations. (Duration: 2 weeks)

LA_5 Interest Groups in Leisure Arts

Dependent upon student interest, participants may elect to participate in activities such as riflery, tennis, or any other related endeavor.

The General Productivity Component is geared to meet individual interests of the students. Modules in this component may be of varying lengths of time. The main thrust of General Productivity is to offer students a variety of alternatives for productive leisure time expenditure. The following activities may be included in the General Productivity Components:

GP_1 Decoupage

GP_2 Chair Caning

GP_3 Furniture Restoration

GP_4 Needle Point -- Crewel -- Embroidery

GP_5 Knitting

GP_6 Crocheting and Macrame

GP_7 Home Repairs

GP_8 Car Repairs

GP_9 Cake Decorating

*Experience in these modules will evolve from structured to non-structured.

Appendix II

Person-Group Relationships

Jay M. Jackson asserted that group membership, or the relationship an individual perceives between himself and a particular group, is a function of the degree of the individual's perception of his attraction to and acceptance by the group in his article, "A Space for Conceptualizing Person-group Relationships," (Human Relations, Vol. 12, pp. 3-5, 1959). Based on the attraction-acceptance dimensions, Jackson conceptualized nine possible categories of group membership.

1- Psychological Membership- Member feels both attracted to and accepted by the group. He views the group as more than a collection of individuals and sees himself as having a definite role in the group. The group satisfies some of his moods.

2- Psychological Non-membership- Members feel neither attraction to nor acceptance by the group. He sees no clear-cut role for himself in the group and has little desire to become a member.

3- Preference Group Relationship- Although member is attracted to the group, he feels that he has not been accepted as a member. Member feels like the person who wants to join an exclusive club, but has not, as yet, been offered one of the available memberships.

4- Marginal Group Relationship- Member feels acceptance by the group, but feels little attraction to belong to it. For example, an individual is welcome to become a member of the faculty association salary committee, but he does not choose to serve.

5- Caste I Relationship- Member is attracted to the group, but is excluded from membership as he does not conform to the qualifications established by the group. An example would be a black student who desires membership in a fraternity whose by-laws bar the participation of non-whites.

6- Caste II Relationship- Member is excluded from membership in the group because of lack of qualifications, but he does not wish to become a member.

7- Rebellious Relationship- Although member is accepted by the group and has a definite role prescription for behavior, he resists this role. He questions the group's procedures and objectives and willfully violates group norms.

8- Crank Relationship- Similar to the rebel, in that the member does not conform to the group prescriptions for behavior, the crank is not to be taken seriously. Member is not accepted by the group and his actions are dismissed as meaningless or merely amusing.

9- War Relationship- Member feels he has been labelled as unfit for membership by the group and at the same time feels that the group is repulsive. Member feels like the only Democrat in an all Republican town during election time.

The Person-Group Relationship Scale (Felsen, "Student Membership Relations in the Classroom Group," paper presented at the 1973 Convention of the American Educational Research Association), measures student perceptions of attraction and acceptance by the class.

The summation of items 1 through 10 and items 11 through 17 yield attraction and acceptance scores respectively. These scores may then be plotted on the graph that follows to indicate the type of relationship a particular student has within the class.

Person-Group Relationship Scale - Form S

For each of the following statements indicate your response in terms of time. You should put the number representing your response in the blank before each question.

none of the time	¼ of the time	½ of the time	3/4 of the time	all of the time
1	2 3 4	5	6 7 8	9

Examples:
7 1. I like pizza.
1 2. I like war.
6 3. I like going to school.

____ 1. I like the ideas which the class members have.

____ 2. It is easy to get along with members of this class.

____ 3. It is good to be with the members of this class.

____ 4. The class members are organized to my liking.

____ 5. I like the way in which class members do things.

____ 6. The people in this class do things in which I like to participate.

____ 7. I think the effort which the class members put forth in school work is about right.

____ 8. The ways in which this class communicates with each other is desirable.

____ 9. I like the way in which class members handle themselves in the school situation.

____ 10. I feel that I can benefit from the time spent with class members.

____ 11. Class members value my participation in class activities.

____ 12. I know where I fit in this group.

____ 13. The class looks upon me as being friendly and helpful.

____ 14. This class looks upon me as a desirable member.

____ 15. The class members involve me within their activities.

____ 16. I know the acceptable things to say about class activities.

____ 17. I am sure of just how friendly I can be with class members.

Person_____ PGRS-Form S Date_____

Group_____

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